

# South Lake Union

## Public Realm Plan

### Policy Issues and Recommendations



# Goal

To develop a plan for the South Lake Union Public Realm – streets, open spaces, and related land use components – that:

- *is consistent with the direction outlined in the neighborhood plan;*
- *establishes a clear direction for private and public actions in the South Lake Union neighborhood;*
- *will help to streamline the approval of actions in the public rights-of-way;*
- *will guide future decision-making about design and development of both public and private projects.*

The following policy questions represent key issues that will guide the preparation of the plan.

## Overall Public Realm Plan

### Policy Issue:

- *Can we adopt an overall plan that identifies the streets and open spaces with the appropriate character for each, and then design and adopt a transportation system and development regulations to support this vision?*

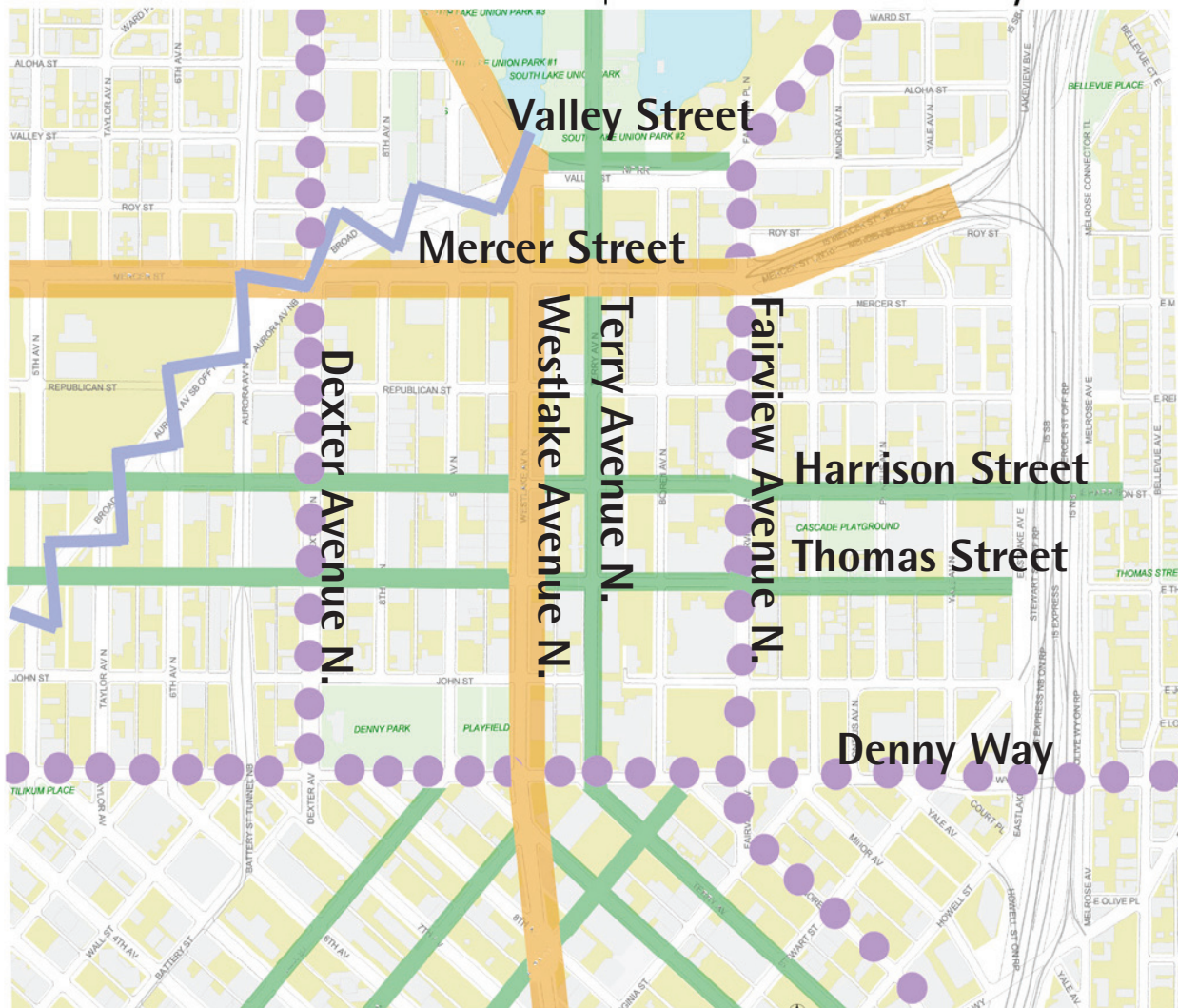
CityDesign recommendation: Develop the Public Realm Plan iteratively with the transportation plan, but establish in advance that certain streets – Terry, Thomas, Harrison, and Valley – have much stronger pedestrian orientation and a de-emphasis on vehicular movement.

# Streets

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## South Lake Union Public Realm Improvement Plan

## Key Streets



## Proposed Street Character per the Blue Ring Open Space Strategy

### Corridor Connectors

Mercer Street ▪ Westlake Avenue North

### Center City Connectors

Dexter Avenue ▪ Fairview Avenue ▪ Denny Avenue

### Green Streets

Harrison Street ▪ Thomas Street ▪ Bell Street ▪ Lenora Street  
Terry Avenue ▪ Ninth Avenue ▪ Blanchard Street

### Bay to Lake Trail

Broad Street



**citydesign**  
17 September 2002

Previous workshops and several current proposals suggest the following character and qualities for each of the major streets in South Lake Union.

## Westlake Avenue North

The neighborhood's "Main Street", primary north south avenue, primary retail street, two way configuration (not supported by some in the neighborhood), with on-street trolley, maximizing on-street parking, special character, part of a larger Westlake "boulevard" that extends from downtown to Fremont.

### Policy questions:

- *Should Westlake be two way?*
- *Should vehicular capacity be reduced in the southern blocks of Westlake to match proposal for south of Denny?*
- *Should Denny/Westlake intersection be reconfigured to create a safer and more comfortable pedestrian crossing?*

CityDesign recommendation: Assume two-way Westlake in transportation planning, and design street to match with proposal for Westlake south of Denny. Widen sidewalks along length of street, and depending on results of transportation analysis, reduce vehicular capacity immediately north of Denny, but expand vehicular capacity closer to Mercer. Create a prominent pedestrian crossing at Westlake/Denny without reducing vehicular capacity on Denny.

## Terry Avenue

Key pedestrian north south spine, primary entrance to SLU Park, slow speed, "woonerf" design with no curb on one side, maintain brick paving or replace where possible; limited retail at key locations

### Policy questions:

- *Should Terry be designed so as to provide access only to properties on the street, and discourage through traffic, providing a corridor primarily design for pedestrian use?*
- *Should we create a woonerf, allowing free pedestrian movement anywhere in the right-of-way (proposed by Schnitzer)*
- *Should we discourage continuous retail use (to emphasize such use on Westlake and Valley)*

CityDesign recommendation: Create a woonerf-like condition, allowing pedestrians free movement anywhere in the right-of-way, and assume very limited capacity for vehicular movement. Allow retail use, but don't require it.

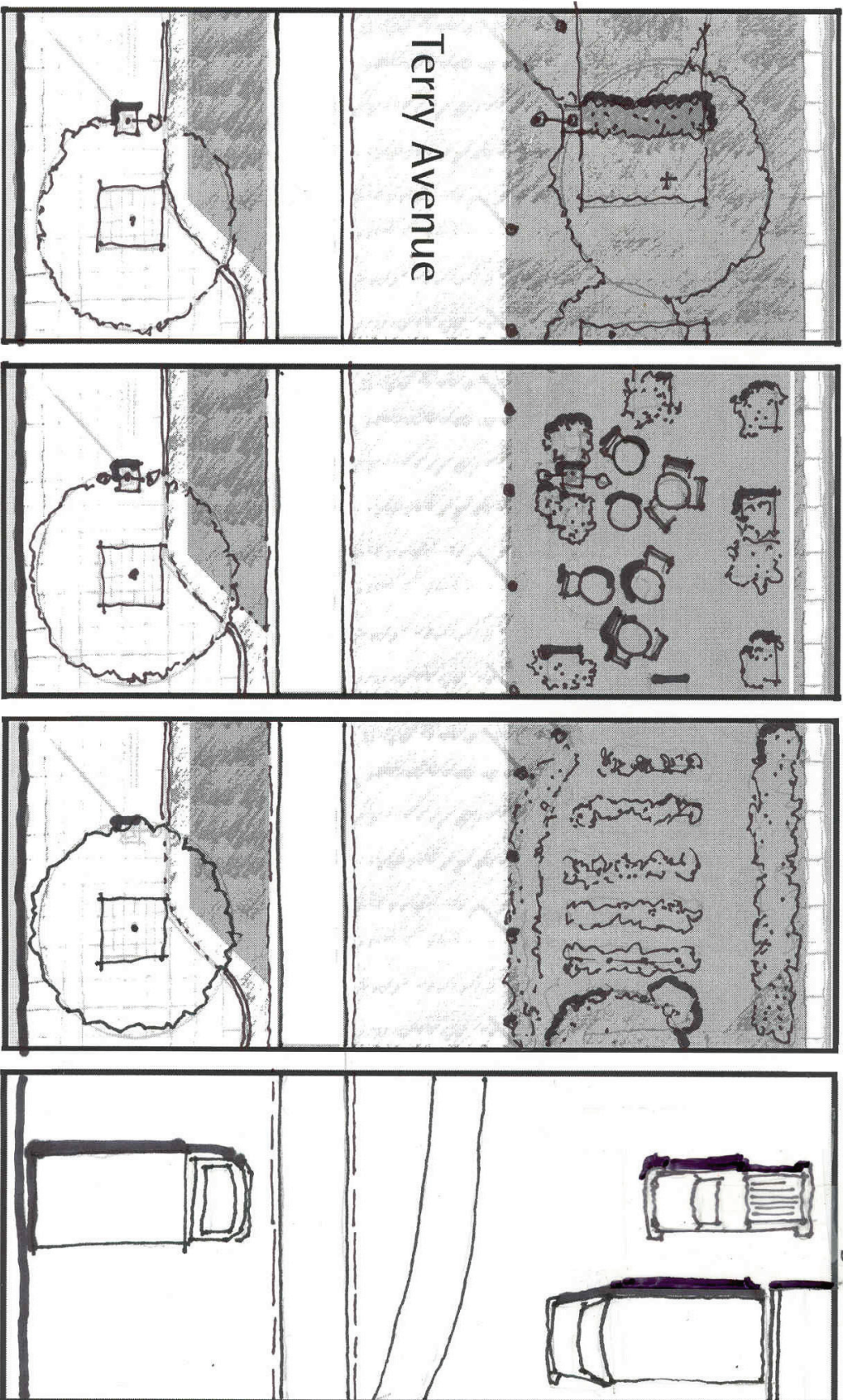


Landscape

Cafe

Garden

Existing Loading



Proposed seven or eight lane boulevard, creating a transition from I-5 ramps to the urban grid; limited retail use; coupled with a reduction in Valley Street to a two lane, two way street.

*Policy Questions:*

- *Is the proposed configuration for Mercer desirable/feasible?*
- *Where should the transition back to the "normal" grid resume?*
- *Should there be on-street parking?*
- *Should we encourage or discourage retail along Mercer?*

CityDesign recommendation: Assume wide two-way configuration and analyze different sidewalk/median configurations. Do not require retail, but allow it and encourage it at key corners at Terry, Westlake and ..? If more retail is found feasible, combine with no median – wider sidewalk scheme.

## Valley Street

Two way, two lane slow-speed roadway, allowing for easier pedestrian crossing and transition to park; on-street parking on both sides; strong street wall and continuous retail on south side

**Policy Questions:**

- *Should we discourage vehicular use of Valley for through movements?*  
*Should there be a strong street wall on the South side of Valley or a softer interface?*
- *Should we encourage active retail uses?*

CityDesign recommendation: Assume slow-speed street but assess impact on park access before determining number of lanes; if park access is a problem, consider 3 or 4 slow speed lanes with parking on south side. Require continuous retail on the south side of the street and a continuous and substantial street wall to frame and enclose the park.

## Thomas and Harrison Streets

Designated as Green Streets between Eastlake and Fairview; proposed for extension of designation as Green Street to Seattle Center; east-west trolley along one.

### Policy Questions:

- Should some vehicular capacity be reduced to support Green Street designs?
- Should the Green Street designation be extended west?

CityDesign recommendation: Reduce vehicular capacity only where this does not impact Mercer/Valley traffic concept west of Fairview. Widen sidewalks east of Fairview especially in area of park.

## All Other Streets

Proposed to be maintained with current capacity and configuration, except Ninth Ave, which would become two way if Westlake is two-way; improved pedestrian conditions as projects are developed; SR99 proposal may recommend contra-flow lanes on some east-west streets.

- Should on street parking be maintained on all streets?
- Should we encourage retail uses on any other streets in the neighborhood, or at any specific locations?

CityDesign recommendation: Maintain normal street standards on all other streets. Consider options in some areas of clustering, rather than regularly spaced street trees. Maintain on-street parking wherever possible; if not possible due to SR99 needs, provide other mitigation (additional street trees, bollards, etc) between pedestrian and vehicular zones.

## Alleys

- Should we identify in advance certain alleys that should not be vacated?
- When alleys are vacated, what are the preferred public benefits for the SLU neighborhood?

CityDesign recommendation: In general, continue existing city policy of discouraging alley vacations. To help guide decisions, analyze existing blocks and place alleys in one of four categories: 1) not to be vacated; 2) could be vacated beneath grade only; 3) could be vacated but building mass and design should reflect alley corridor; 4) could be vacated entirely with no limits on design direction. Establish a package of preferred public benefits in advance that developers would provide with a vacation.

## Parks/Open Spaces

Existing/proposed parks include South Lake Union park, a regional facility with an adopted conceptual master plan and design just underway; Cascade playground, a neighborhood park; and Denny Park, a formal passive park; Denny Playfield is a temporary facility on privately owned land that is proposed for future development.

### Policy Questions:

- Is there a need for additional public park space?
- Should we encourage additional private open spaces?
- How can the proposed Interurban plaza become a neighborhood open space under private ownership?
- Should the uses in the Denny playfield be accommodated elsewhere in the neighborhood?

CityDesign recommendation: Further develop design and management of Tech Court plaza to ensure public access and attractiveness. Do not provide similarly sized private open spaces in the neighborhood, but consider smaller pocket parks for specific public uses. Look for creative locations for outdoor recreational facilities in the area (rooftops, over or under freeway) that are not necessarily in the SLU neighborhood proper.

## Recommended Actions

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design  
Short term (Immediately)



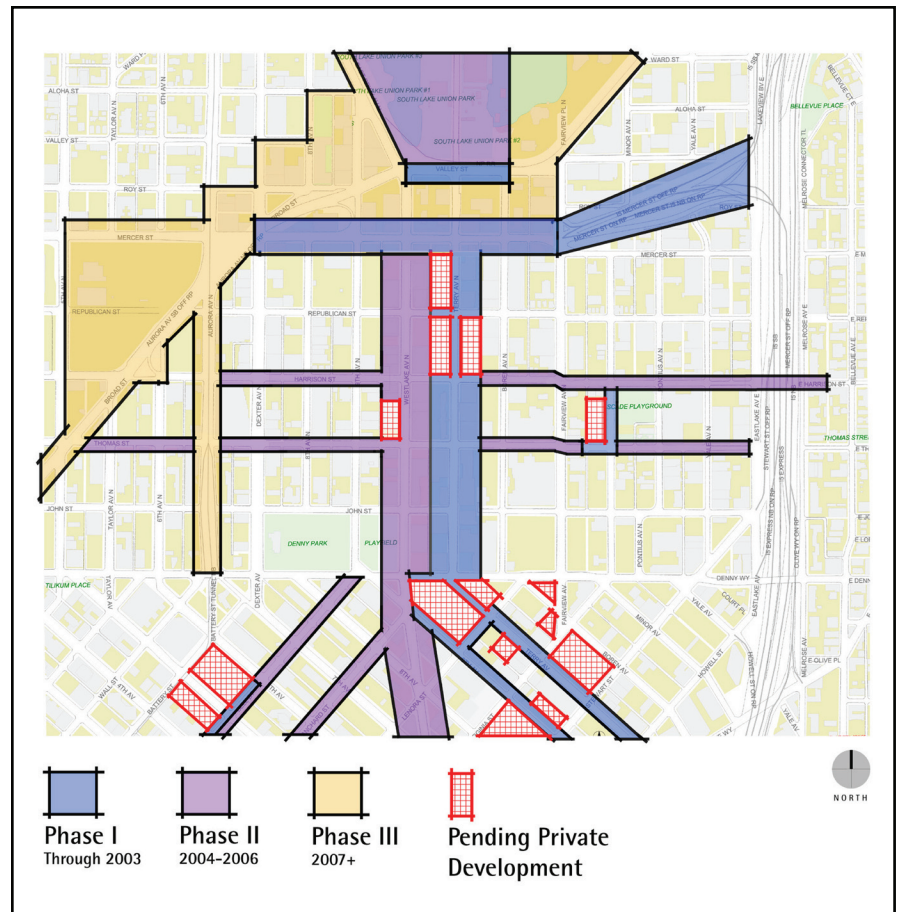
- Determine design direction for Terry Avenue, and request CityDesign and Vulcan consultants collaborate on proposal, and review with SDOT staff and SLUFAN
- Coordinate overall concepts with Vulcan consultants
- Establish team to review design concepts

## Mid term (Spring 2003)

- Working with the Lake Union Community, agree on design concept for Terry
- Working with the Lake Union Community, agree on design direction for Westlake, and seeks funds for Westlake concept design (both north and south of Denny)
- Working with the Lake Union Community, agree on design direction for Harrison and Thomas
- Complete draft of Public Realm Plan and review with community
- Preliminary transportation study results released at South Lake Union Transportation Open House
- Coordinate Public Realm Plan with Transportation Plan

## Long Term (through Fall 2003)

- Finalize Public Realm Plan with completion of Transportation Plan



Phasing Plan

# Appendix

## Proposed Street Classifications

From 2002 South Lake Union Streetscape Study

### A Streets for Moving

Mercer, Fifth, Dexter, Westlake, Fairview, Eastlake

#### Function

Streets are extensions of city fabric and connections to the region.

Streets accommodate high volumes of relatively fast-moving traffic.

Streets must provide efficient traffic flow and access to regional destinations.

Primarily auto and transit oriented streets.

May include bicycle, streetcars, etc.

Streets primarily accommodate vehicular use but also gave pedestrian appeal.

On-street parking supports adjacent retail use.

#### Aesthetic Recommendation

Create grand streets with 'civic scale' from both a vehicular and pedestrian perspective.

Provide bold, simple, understandable hardscape and landscape patterns.

Employ bold thematic streetscape elements that are scaled to the whole street corridor.

Enhance and protect existing view corridors.

Propose landscape median for Mercer Street.

Street tree patterns and landscape design should respond to surrounding city fabric and local districts along the corridor.

Provide safe, meaningful, interestingly modulated and linked landscape spaces.

Provide for seasonal lighting opportunities.

Provide 'Front Yards' that accommodates adjacent retail/commercial uses and that promote related pedestrian activity.

Provide pedestrians with a sense of safety and separation from moving and parked vehicles.

Facilitate safe pedestrian crossing at intersections.

Screen and buffer undesirable views.

# B Streets for Working

Valley, Harrison, Ninth, Boren, Terry

## Function

Streets provide access to and from Type 'A' streets

Streets accommodate high volume and low speed traffic.

Streets may have special multi-modal use (such as the proposed street car routes.)

Streets support mixed office retail and commercial uses at street level.

Streets are characterized by substation street-level use and pedestrian activity.

On-street parking is important to adjacent uses.

Streets primarily 'weekday' and 'working' environments.

Pedestrian use is highest during weekday business hours.

## Aesthetic Recommendation

Scale should reflect pedestrian dominance and allow for local through traffic.

Accommodate transit stops as special multi-modal places and design opportunities

Use adjacent commercial and specialty retails as opportunities to enhance pedestrian activity and to generate specific visual character.

Proved a consistent hardscape solution that accommodates opportunities for unique accent areas.

'Choreograph' planting design to accommodate the function and intensity of adjacent uses.

Planting solutions may be asymmetrical from one side of the street to the other, but should be consistent form one end of the street to the other.

Do no rely on banners and similar elements to provide identity.

Provide architectural weather protection to support pedestrian uses and to enhance district identity.

Provide lighting solutions that promotes evening uses and activities.

Employ a 'district light' standard to enhance visual consistency and district identity.

Incorporate art and historical artifacts thoughtfully in the streetscape to recall the past and to enhance district identity.

# C Streets for Living

## John, Thomas, Republican, and Eighth

### Function

Streets have 'Font Yard' function for adjacent residential uses.

Streets provide access to and from Type 'A' and 'B' streets.

Streets accommodate low volume/ low speed traffic.

Through streets may be discouraged.

Streets provide maxim green open space.

Streets have highest pedestrian use.

Streets have fine grain and include more pedestrian amenities.

Streets are primarily 'Evening' and 'Weekend' environments.

On street parking is important to residents and guests.

### Aesthetic Recommendation

Develop 'Garden Streets' that maximize landscaped areas and enhance pedestrian amenities.

Encourage an eclectic character that is informally ordered, scaled to relaxed and quiet residential uses.

Provide 'front yards' for adjacent residential uses.

Consider the adjacent building edge treatment in the design of pedestrian zones.

Provide privacy between the sidewalk and adjacent residential uses.

Where appropriate employ a 'woonerf' cross-section

Employ consistent and distinctive pedestrian intersection crossing design.

Pursue variety in planting selection throughout; texture, color, pattern and use.

Employ unique plant materials (e.g. medicinal, edible, for cut flowers, etc.)

Pursue a variety in paving solutions while maximizing use of permeable paving materials.

Where appropriate, employ district or subdistrict pedestrian light standards to enhance nighttime safety and local identity.

Shield adjacent residential use from undesirable light sources.

Seek historical opportunities and artifacts.

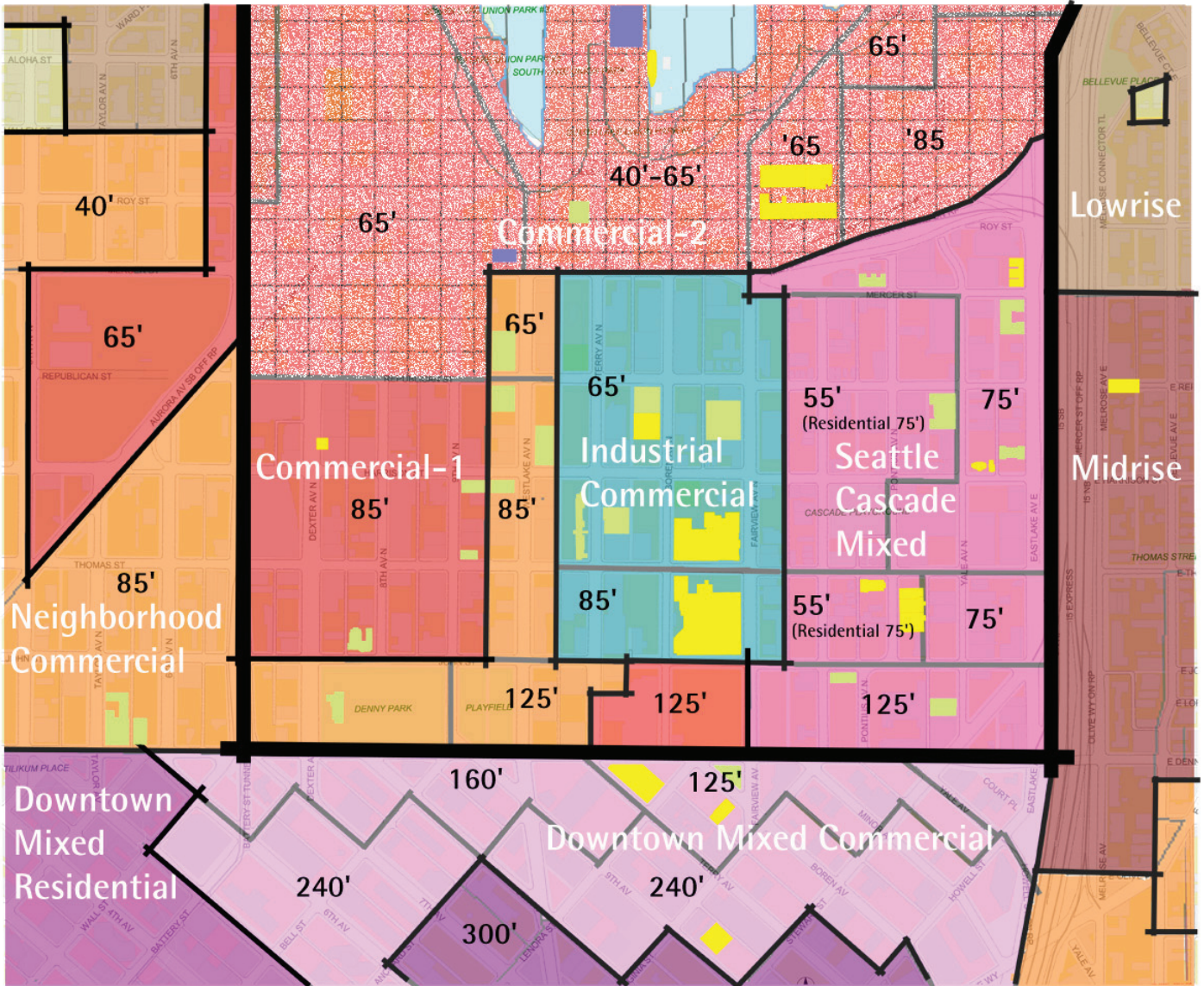


# Maps

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## South Lake Union Public Realm Improvement Plan

## Zoning



**South Lake Union Urban Village Boundary**

**Single purpose residential development prohibited**

**75' Zoning Height Limit**

**Designated Seattle Historic Landmarks**

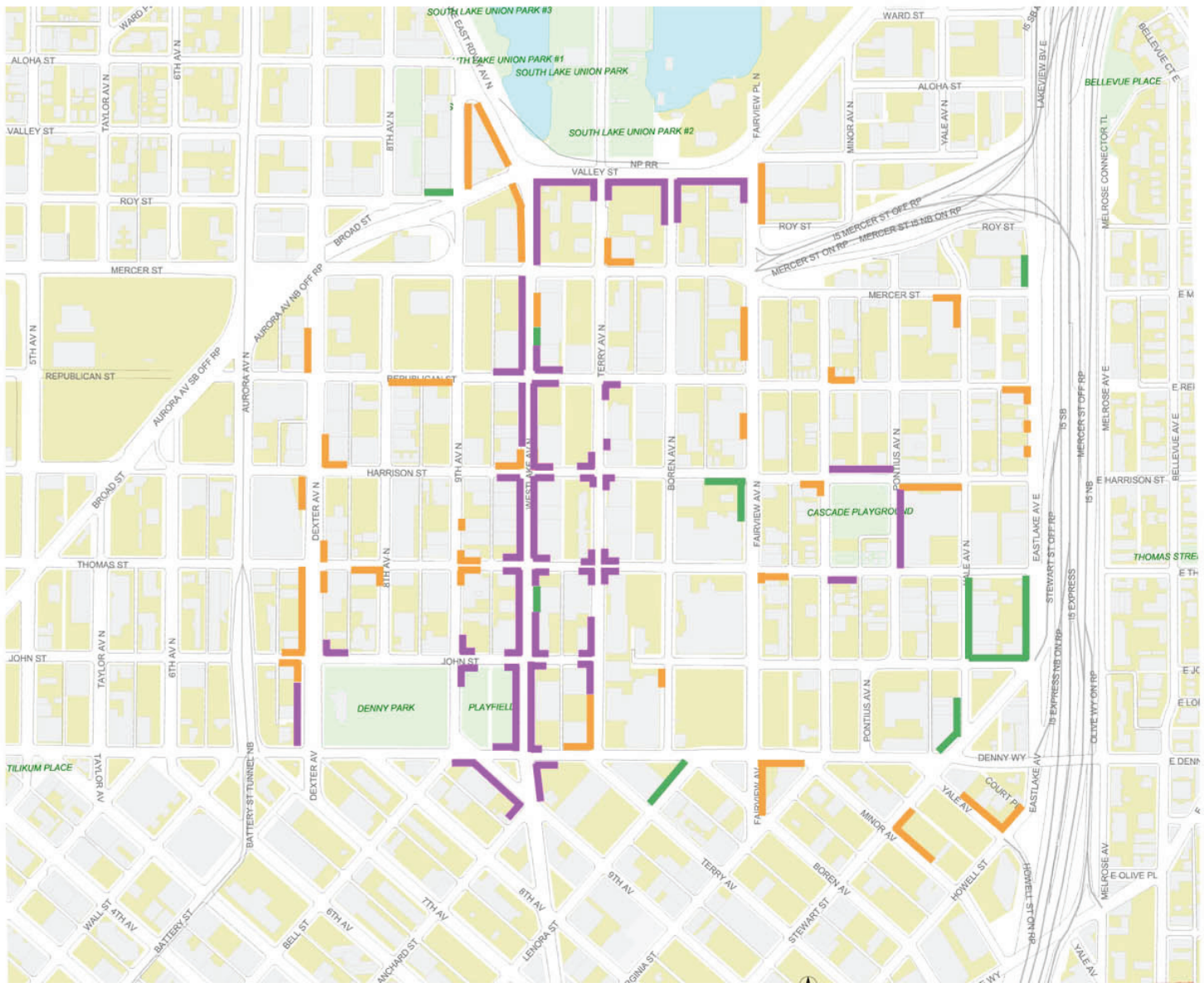
**Icon Building (Likely to Meet Landmark Criteria)**

**Icon Building (May Meet Landmark Criteria)**



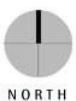
# South Lake Union Public Realm Improvement Plan

## Pedestrian Oriented Building Edge



## Pedestrian Oriented Building Edge

- Existing-Fair ———
- Existing-Good ———
- Proposed ———



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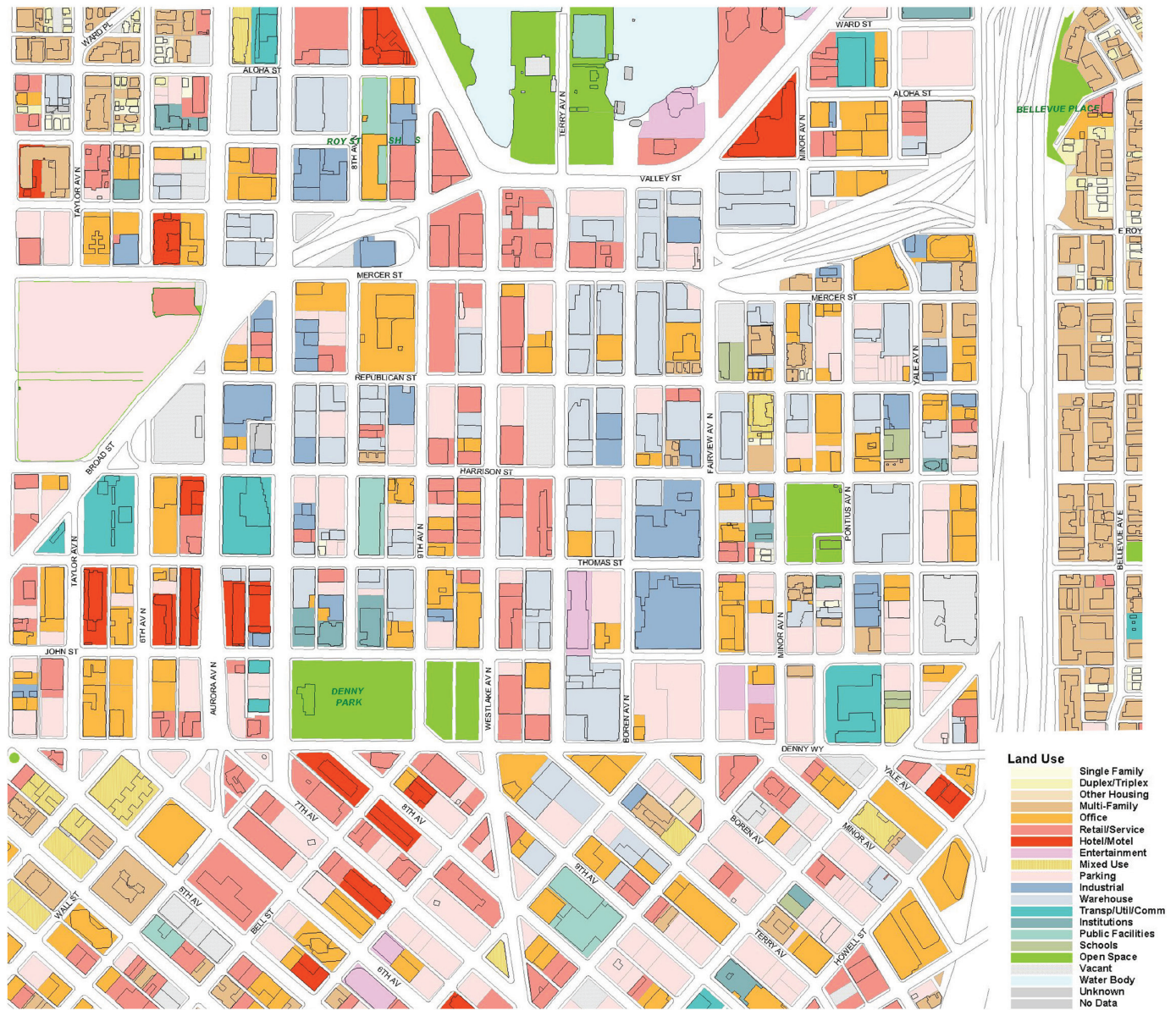
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# South Lake Union Public Realm Improvement Plan

## Land Use



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14 October 2002

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